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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/NGA AND EUR/SE
AGRICULTURE FOR FAS - U/S PENN AND EC - CHAMBLISS

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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [IZ](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [UNSC](#)
SUBJECT: FOREIGN TRADE CLAIMS TUZMEN'S VISIT TO IRAQ
GENERATED 700 MILLION EURO IN CONTRACTS FOR TURKISH FIRMS

REF: A. ANKARA 262
[B](#). ANKARA 302
[C](#). ANKARA 8863

(U) Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Deutsch.
Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Econoff met with Tevfik Mengü, Director General for Agreements at the Foreign Trade Undersecretariat, on January 14 for a readout on State Minister Kursad Tuzmen's January 10 to 12 visit to Baghdad. Mengü characterized the visit as very successful, noting that, in addition to Tuzmen's one-on-one meeting with Saddam Hussein, the delegation, which included Energy Ministry Deputy Undersecretary Nermin Berki and an MFA official, had met with ten Iraqi ministers and the Deputy Vice-President Taha Yasin Ramazan. He asserted that the 400 Turkish executives travelling with the delegation had closed about 700 million euro worth of contracts in a range of industries. While he did not go into detail, he guessed that about one quarter of the contracts were in agriculture, including some wheat exports. He stated that the total value of the contracts would not be known until companies sent the contracts to the Foreign Trade Undersecretariat for submission to the UN Oil for Food Program.

[2](#). (SBU) In a briefing for the press, Tuzmen said that the two sides signed memoranda of understanding in the energy sector (on Iraq-Turkey natural gas exports, the Gharraf Field Oil development and oil exploration). However, MFA energy officials told us that the delegation discussed the existing Turkey-Iraq Gas Protocol (ref C), but no new agreements resulted from the meetings. Tuzmen also told the press that a Turkey-Iraq Joint Economic Commission meeting would be held in March in Ankara. Mengü noted that no date for the JEC had been set.

[3](#). (S) Tuzmen has said he used the visit to deliver a political message to Saddam Hussein from PM Gul. MFA Undersecretary Ziyal told the Ambassador that Tuzmen had delivered a strong message that the onus was on Saddam to avoid war in the region by disclosing information on weapons of mass destruction (ref B). However, the substance of Tuzmen's visit was overwhelmingly commercial, and has come under criticism from Ak party colleagues, the political opposition and the press. Emin Sirin, the Deputy Chairman of Parliament's Foreign Policy Committee, strongly criticized the visit on January 6 (ref A). In private conversations with Polmilcouns on the margins of bilateral military talks on January 13, a number of Turkish general officers roundly criticized the Tuzmen visit as ill-timed and counterproductive to Turkey's longer-term interests. The press has widely cited Tuzmen's joint press conference with Deputy Vice President Ramazan, which Ramazan apparently cut short on being asked a question about Turkish claims to Mosul and Kirkuk. Numerous articles have questioned Tuzmen's and the GOT's judgement in leading such a large delegation to Iraq at this time. Republican People's Party (CHP) Chairman Deniz Baykal said that Turkey had been humiliated and subjected to rude behavior, and that the visit was "meaningless, untimely and unnecessary".

[4](#). (C) Comment: On Iraq matters, Tuzmen and Turkey's Foreign Trade bureaucracy appear to be oblivious to anything beyond short-term commercial gain. However, domestic criticism of Tuzmen's trade mission suggests that many view Tuzmen and his visit as out of step with Turkey's larger interests. In our meetings with GOT officials, we have pointed out that, because of its heavy commercial tone, this visit sent a decidedly mixed message to Saddam.

PEARSON